CLOUD

by Noujou Junichi

Cloud Ch 1

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I WANT TO CREATE A KINGDOM ABOVE THE CLOUDS!

能條純一、三弾新連載第2話

彼が思い描く日本の革命とは――。

鞍生人（くらうど）

level.2 オセロゲーム

能條純一

前号まで

東京メトロの運転攻撃が突然故障。原因は何者かによるクラッキングということで、その首謀者は、鞍生人という男。彼の目的は「霞の上に王国を築くこと」!? 彼を独自に追う公安の刑事・須藤とセキュリティ会社の調査員・加二人がそれぞれの方法で鞍生人と接触しようと試みるが!?

YES!
A KINGDOM... ON TOP OF THE CLOUDS...?!
WHAT?! THE PASSENGERS ARE RIOTING OUTSIDE THE STATION?
WHY THE FUCK WON'T YOU LET US THROUGH?! WHAT'S GOING ON?

T/N: A LITTLE OVER 100 USD

Who is she calling at this kind of time...?!

OH! IT'S YOU!
THAT MAKES ME BLUSH! YOU REALLY WROTE DOWN MY NUMBER BACK THEN.

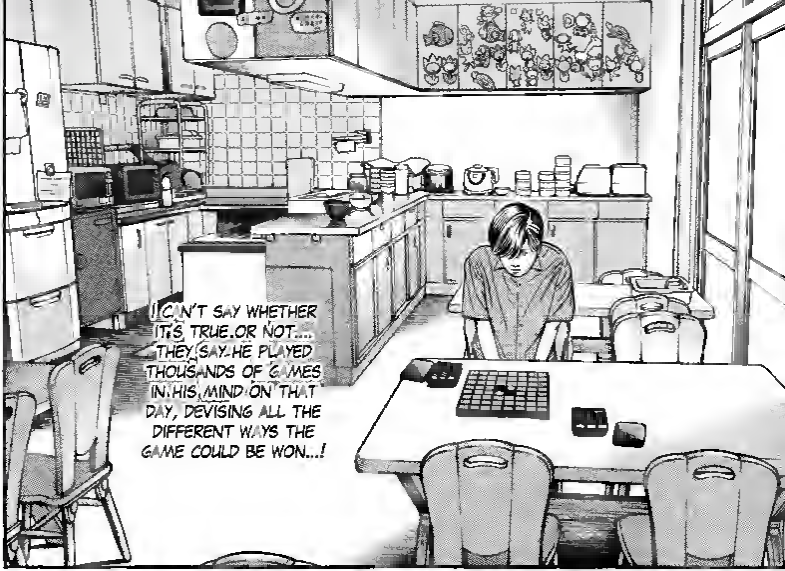
SO? WHAT'S UP?
TWITTER? YOU ARE TALKING WITH THE HACKER...?
THAT'S COOL! ...AND?
WHAT? WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME?

I THOUGHT I COULD GET SOME KIND OF SECRET NEGOTIATIONS TRICK OUT OF YOU...
AREN'T YOU A PRO AT THIS?
A NEGOTIATIONS TRICK? LIKE, IF YOU CAN'T PRESS THEM FOR INFORMATION, YOU PULL IT OUT OF THEM?
ANYWAY, FOR THE TIME BEING, FOLLOW WHATEVER THE HACKER SEEMS TO WANT, THEN, IF YOU SEE A CHANCE, YOU JUMP IN AND TAKE THE LEAD FORCING HIM TO FOLLOW YOU PASSIVELY.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE, JUST GIVE ME A RING.
.....
ME? RIGHT NOW?

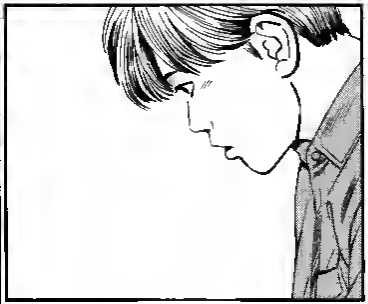
Hehe he...
YOU ARE CHASING A BOY, YOU CLAIM IS "TOO INTELLIGENT" I BET YOU ARE DOING SOME-THING... WHERE AREYOU?
I'LL GIVE YOU A CALL IF I NEED YOUR HELP, TOO.
SEE YOU..!!

...CLOUD!! BOY, I SURE REMEMBER THAT KID/ AND NOT JUST BECAUSE OF HIS ODD NAME...
SO WHAT TYPE OF A BOY WAS CLOUD?
HE'S THE BOY SECOND FROM THE LEFT.
WELL, I SUPPOSE ONE THING IS THAT HE ALWAYS STARED AT THE SKY, BY HIM-SELF...
HE ALWAYS CAME FIRST IN THE TEST SCORES... BUT SOMEHOW, HE WAS NATURALLY QUIET, NOT BECAUSE HE WAS MAD OR ANYTHING.
HMM... HE'S SMILING HERE...

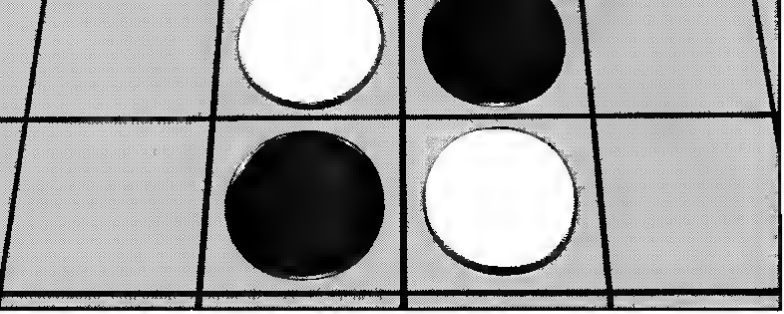
YES, THAT'S TRUE AT THAT TIME, THEY WERE WINNING IN EVERY SINGLE GAME...
WINNING EVERY SINGLE GAME...?
!!
HER NAME IS NAKANO-SENSEI. SHE OBVIOUSLY TOOK AN INTEREST IN THAT KID AND DECIDED TO TEACH HIM OTHELLO. THOSE OTHELLO GAMES...
DO YOU SEE THE WOMAN AT THE TOP LEFT? SHE WAS THE SUPERVISOR
THEN ONE DAY, HE JUST STARED AT THE OTHELLO GAME SILENTLY FOR HOURS...
NO MATTER HOW MANY GAMES THEY PLAYED, THAT BOY COULD NEVER WIN AGAINST NAKANO-SENSEI...


I CAN'T SAY WHETHER IT'S TRUE OR NOT... THEY SAY HE PLAYED THOUSANDS OF GAMES IN HIS MIND ON THAT DAY, DEVISING ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS THE GAME COULD BE WON...!

THE PICTURE WAS TAKEN AROUND THAT TIME.



NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES SHE PLAYED AGAINST HIM
AND AFTER THAT, NANAKO-SENSEI NEVER WON AGAINST HIM AGAIN



WHAT IS... THAT?!

2
3
4
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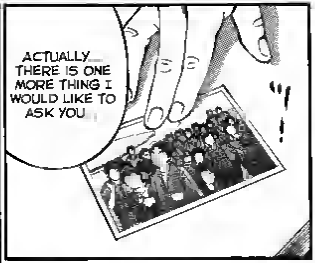
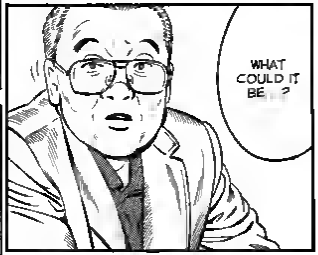
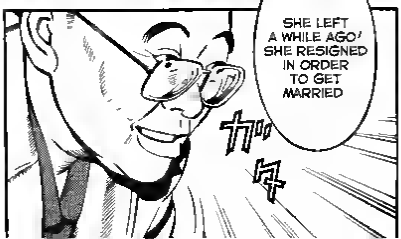
6
7
8

THANK YOU VERY MUCH! I APPRECIATE ALL THE TIME YOU GAVE ME ON A BUSY DAY.
I HOPE THAT HELPS. I WISH YOU THE BEST OF LUCK FOR FINDING CLOUD-KUN.

IS THAT NANAKO-SENSEI STILL TEACHING HERE?


ACTUALLY... THERE IS ONE MORE THING I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU.


WHAT COULD IT BE...?


SHE LEFT A WHILE AGO. SHE RESIGNED IN ORDER TO GET MARRIED
ガーン

AKI-HABARA?!
IT WASN'T ALL THAT LONG AGO... SHE MARRIED A COOK AND SHE TOLD ME THEY SET UP A RESTAURANT IN AKIHABARA.
菜菜
Chinese Restaurant

IT SEEMS THEY DON'T HAVE MANY REGULARS AND IN A DAY, THEY ONLY GET A FEW CUSTOMERS...
WELL, MORE ON THE FRINGE OF AKIHABARA, DOWN PAST SHOWA STREET, I BELIEVE... IT SEEMS BUSINESS ISN'T SO GOOD DOWN THERE
菜菜
Chinese Restaurant

.....!!

a b c d e f g h
LET'S PLAY...

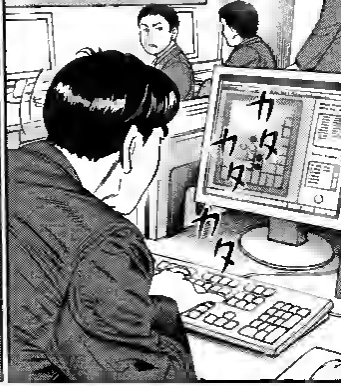
Yodobashi-Akiba
秋葉原 PM 05：49

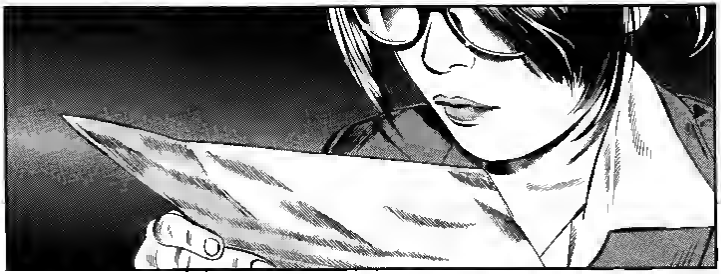
IT'S SO CROWDED! WHAT HAPPENED?!

Cafe

...WHAT IS THIS?!

!!



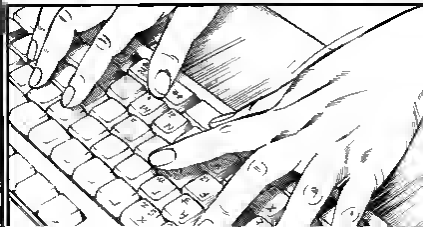


As you wish!

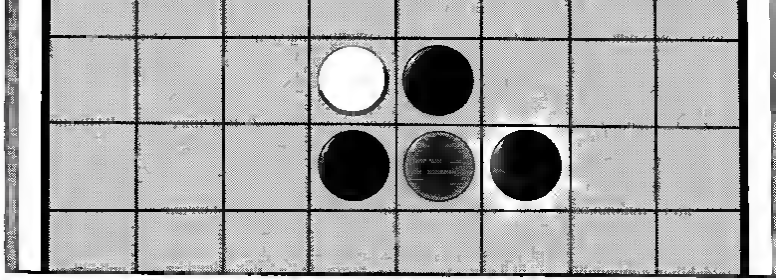
I will play with you.

But, if I win, you must answer any question I ask you.

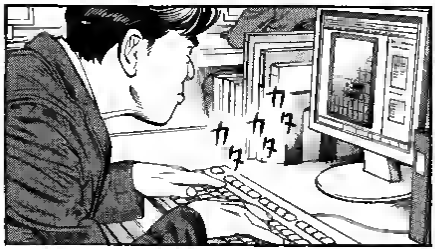
...okay?



SURE.
DO YOU WANT TO GO FIRST OR SECOND?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
GO SECOND! STARTING SECOND HAS A HIGHER CHANCE OF WINNING, ACCORDING TO STATISTICS!
FIRST OR SECOND... WHICH ONE IS MORE ADVANTAGEOUS? NEITHER... YOU JUST HAVE TO CALCULATE STRICTLY.
RATE OF WINNING: FIRST, 49 SECOND, 51
I will go second.
SHUT UP! YOU'RE BEING ANNOYING...!
OKAY! WELL THEN, I'LL BEGIN!



THERE MUST HAVE BEEN AN ACCIDENT IN THE METRO OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT! STANDING IN LINE WON'T GET US ANYWHERE. WANT TO GRAB A BITE TO EAT?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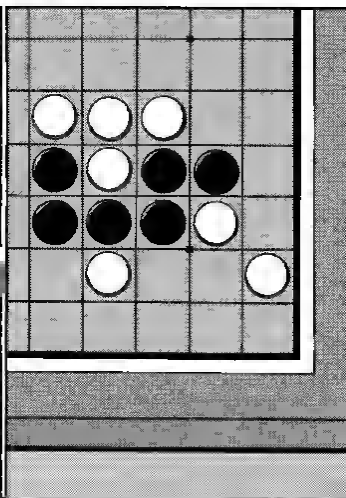
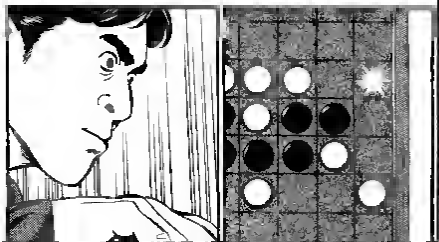
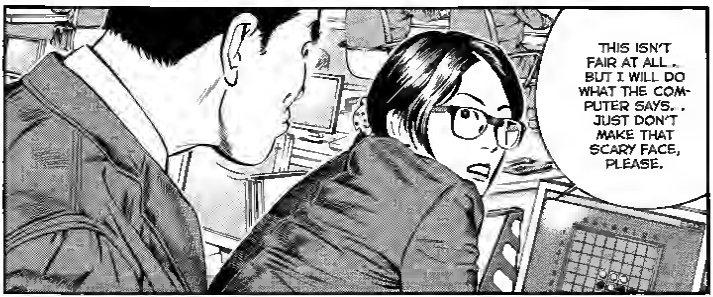
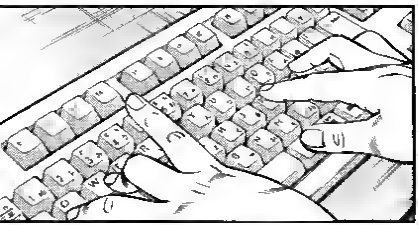
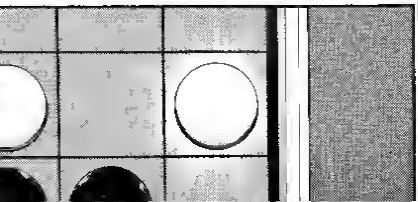




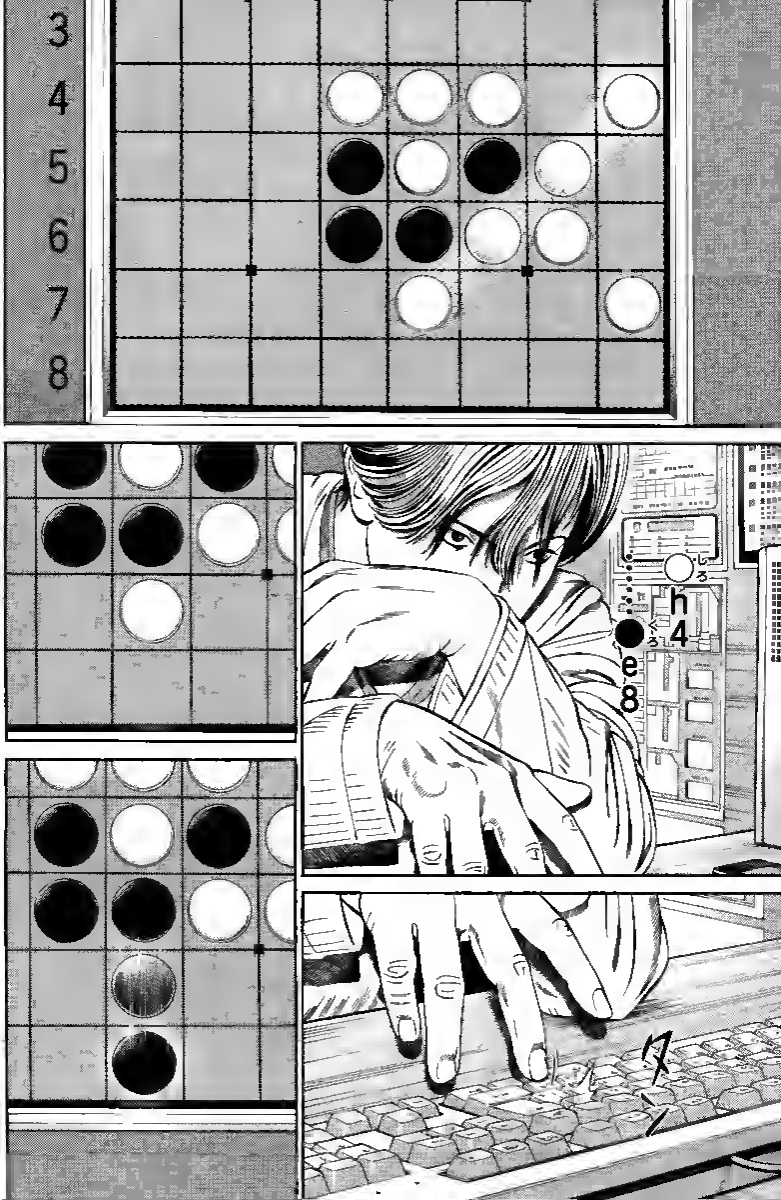
WHITE TO H4! THAT'S WHERE YOU HAVE TO PLAY!


THIS ISN'T FAIR AT ALL. BUT I WILL DO WHAT THE COMPUTER SAYS.. JUST DON'T MAKE THAT SCARY FACE, PLEASE.





OTHELLO IS A GAME IN WHICH HUMANS CAN NOT WIN AGAINST COMPUTERS..


3
4
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8
h4
e8

創業
昭和二十九年
中華

EEEH?! YOU'RE FULL?!

THERE WAS?
YEAH, I'M PRETTY SURE! LET'S GO!
IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, THERE'S A CHINESE RESTAURANT DOWN THAT WAY...
WHAT DO WE DO?

YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE THE EDGES! PULL WHITE TO F8!
JUST TAKE THE EDGE! WHITE TO D8!
IS THE DEFINITE STRATEGY TO WINNING OTHELLO REALLY TO TAKE THE EDGES? OR TO TAKE THE CORNERS?

6
7
8
CLOUD-KUN... PLEASE DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE LURING ME IN TO TAKE THE EDGES...?!

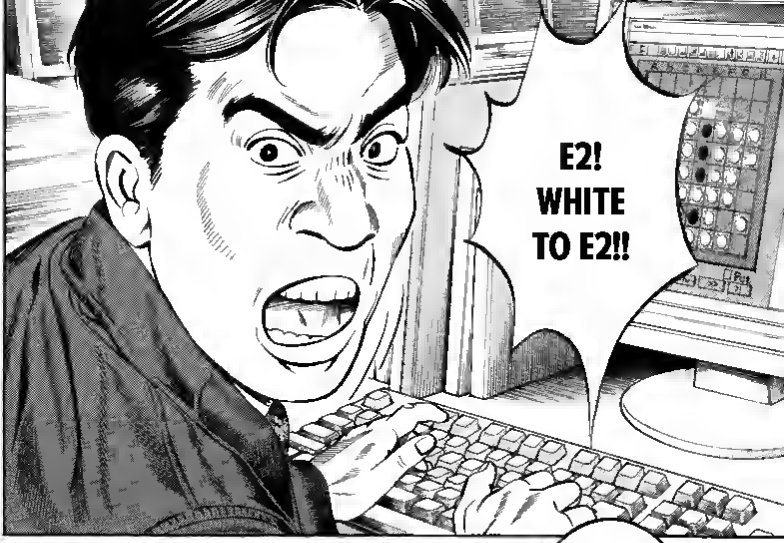
According to eye witnesses, it seems that the gates are experiencing some kind of technical failure. Whenever a C Card is swiped—
I'm located in front of the ticket gates at Akihabara station right now. The scene is really chaotic
AH! HERE IT IS! SAI SAI!

(T/N: SAI IS THE JAPANESE PRONUNCIATION OF THE CHINESE WORD "CAI CAI" WHICH IS EQUIVALENT TO "CUISINE" OR "FOOD" IN ENGLISH.)

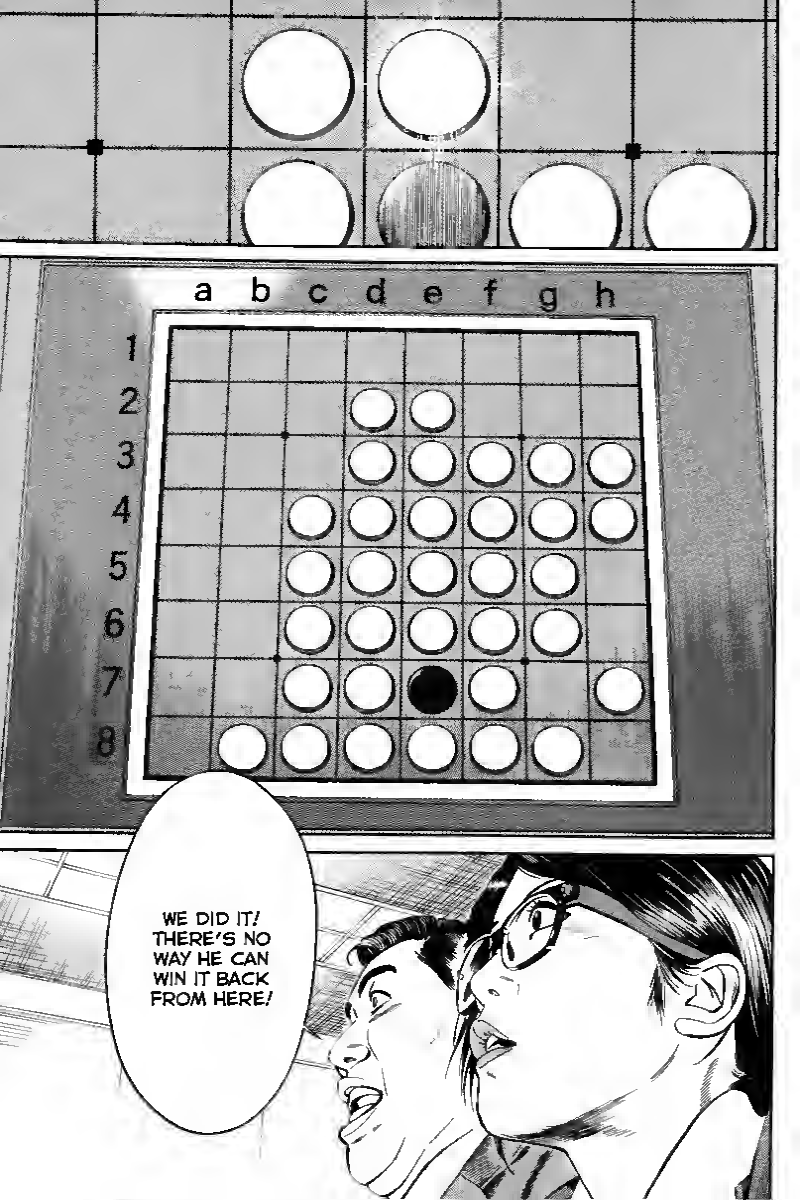
LET'S GO IN!
HUH? HERE REALLY WAS A PLACE OUT HERE A CHINESE RESTAU-RANT
菜

ARE YOU SURE? THERE ISN'T A SINGLE CUSTOMER—

WELCOME!


E2!
WHITE
TO E2!!

ALRIGHT,
ALRIGHT,
I GOT IT!
BUT ARE
YOU SURE
IT'S GOING
TO BE OKAY?
IT'S FINE!
JUST PUT
IT ON E2,
ALREADY!


a b c d e f g h
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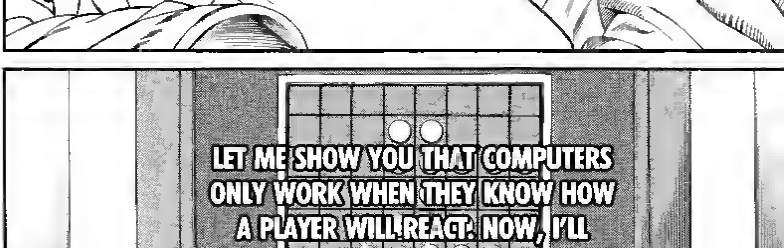
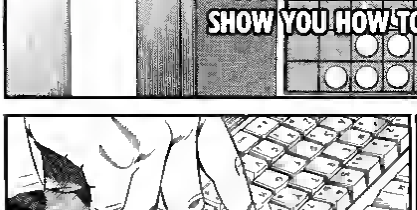
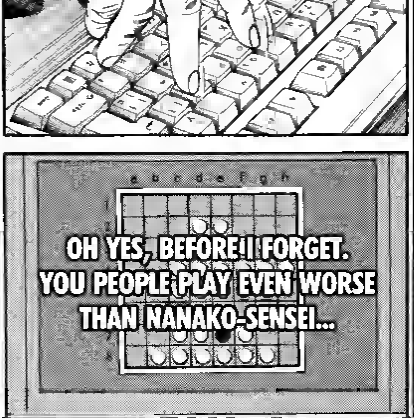
8
WE DID IT! THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN WIN IT BACK FROM HERE!


LET ME SHOW YOU THAT COMPUTERS ONLY WORK WHEN THEY KNOW HOW A PLAYER WILL REACT. NOW, I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO PLAY THIS GAME.



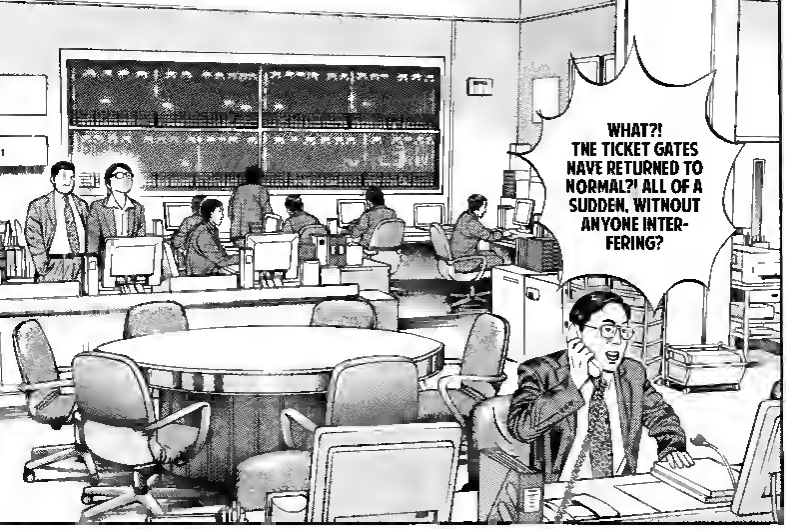

OH YES, BEFORE I FORGET. YOU PEOPLE PLAY EVEN WORSE THAN NANAKO-SENSEI...

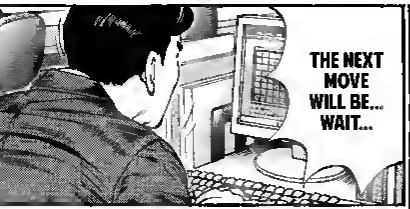
FOR NOW, WE'LL HAVE TWO BEERS AND AN OOLONG TEA!
AND... GET US SOME GYOZA, PORK LIVER WITH LEEK AND FRIED RICE WITH SHRIMP
.....
FOR TWO...
I'D LIKE THE FRIED CHICKEN WITH SWEET AND SOUR SAUCE AND HALF A BOWL OF RICE, PLEASE!
PLEASE, COME THIS WAY. YOU CAN SIT WHEREVER YOU WISH!
WEL-COOOME!

EXCUSE ME, A TABLE FOR SIX!

6:30 PM
YOU DON'T HAVE A TABLE FOR 8, BY ANY CHANCE, DO YOU?

WHAT?! THE TURNSTILES HAVE RETURNED TO NORMAL?! ALL OF A SUDDEN, WITHOUT ANY-ONE DOING ANYTHING?

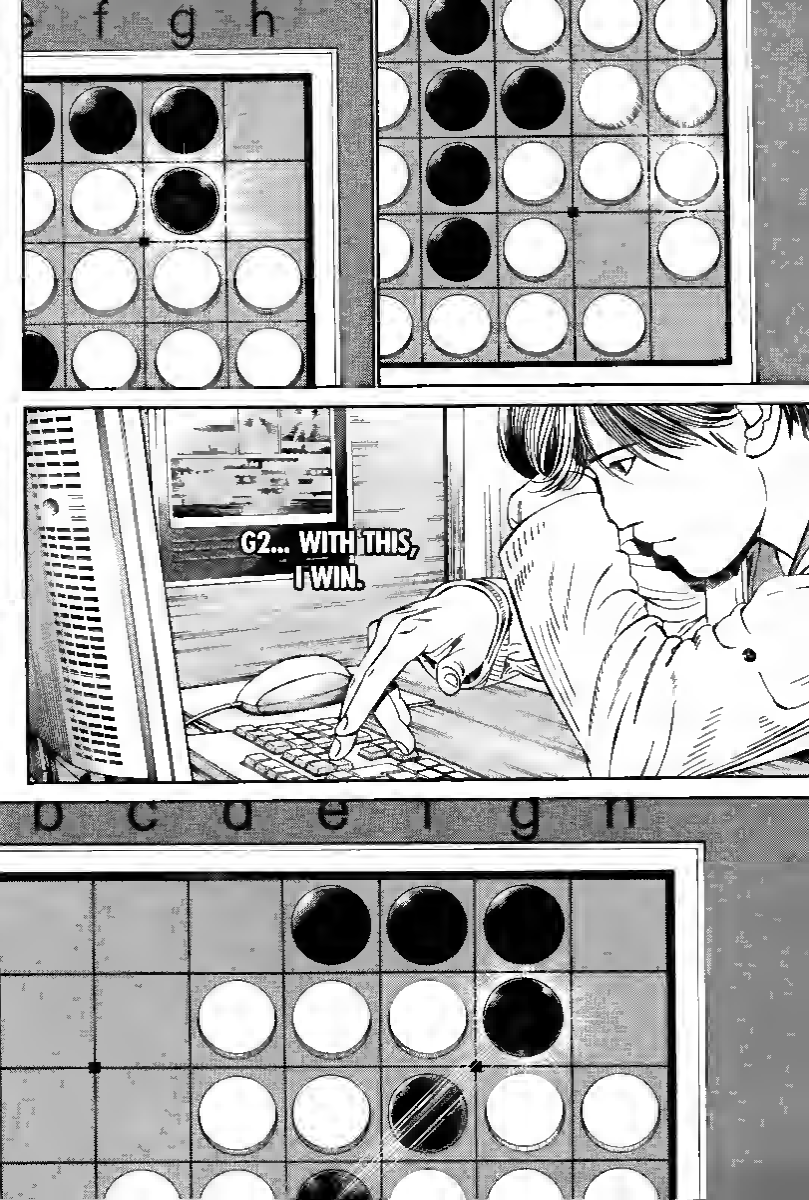

WHAT?! THE TICKET GATES HAVE RETURNED TO NORMAL?! ALL OF A SUDDEN, WITHOUT ANYONE INTERFERING?


THE NEXT MOVE WILL BE... WAIT...

IN ANY CASE, THE GAME CHANGES SO DRAMATICALLY AT EVERY MOVE THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO WAY TO READ AHEAD THAT FAR...

H6... MOVE WHITE TO H6!

IN A FULL GAME, THERE SHOULD BE A GAME-TREE COMPLEXITY OF 10^60... IN THAT TYPE OF RIDICULOUSLY COMPLEX SCENARIO... HUMAN'S SHOULD BE OUTMATCHED BY COMPUTERS WHATEVER THEY TRY...
IN A GAME OF OTHELLO, THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 10 POSSIBLE PLACES TO GO IN EACH MOVE.


e f g h
G2... WITH THIS, I WIN.
b c d e f g h

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パンチでQ!!

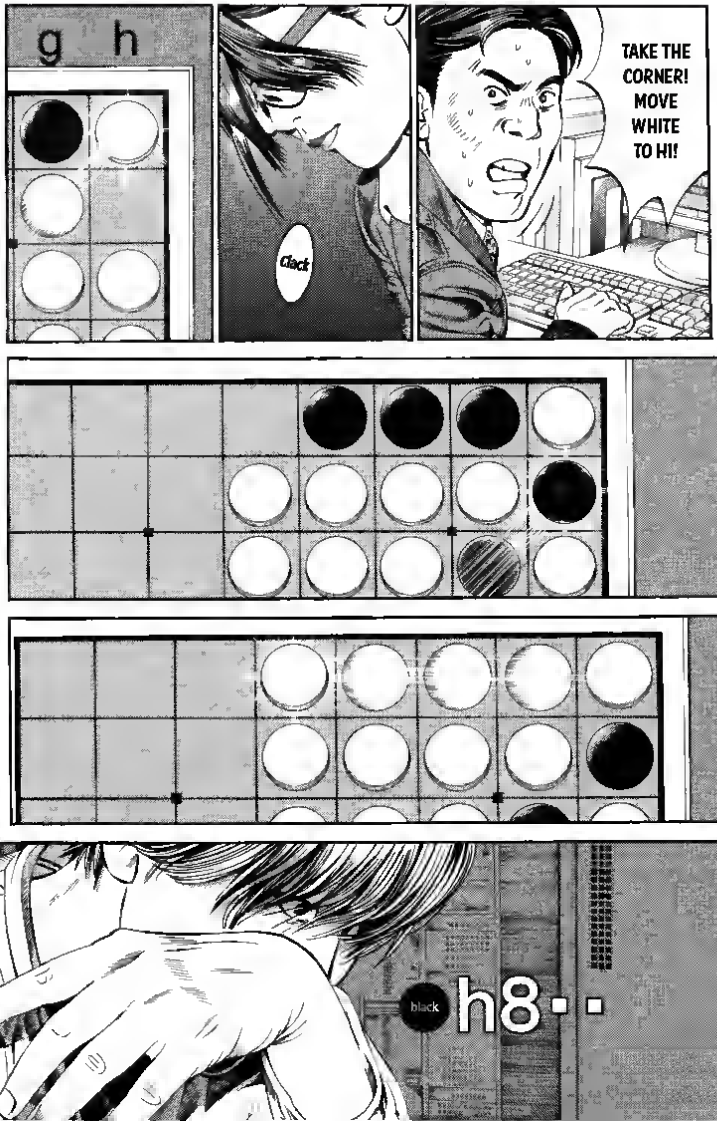
PLEASE! WE WILL BE AWAITING YOUR RETURN!
NOW THAT I KNOW ABOUT YOUR PLACE, I WILL DROP BY MORE OFTEN!
THAT WAS REALLY GOOD! THANKS FOR THE MEAL!

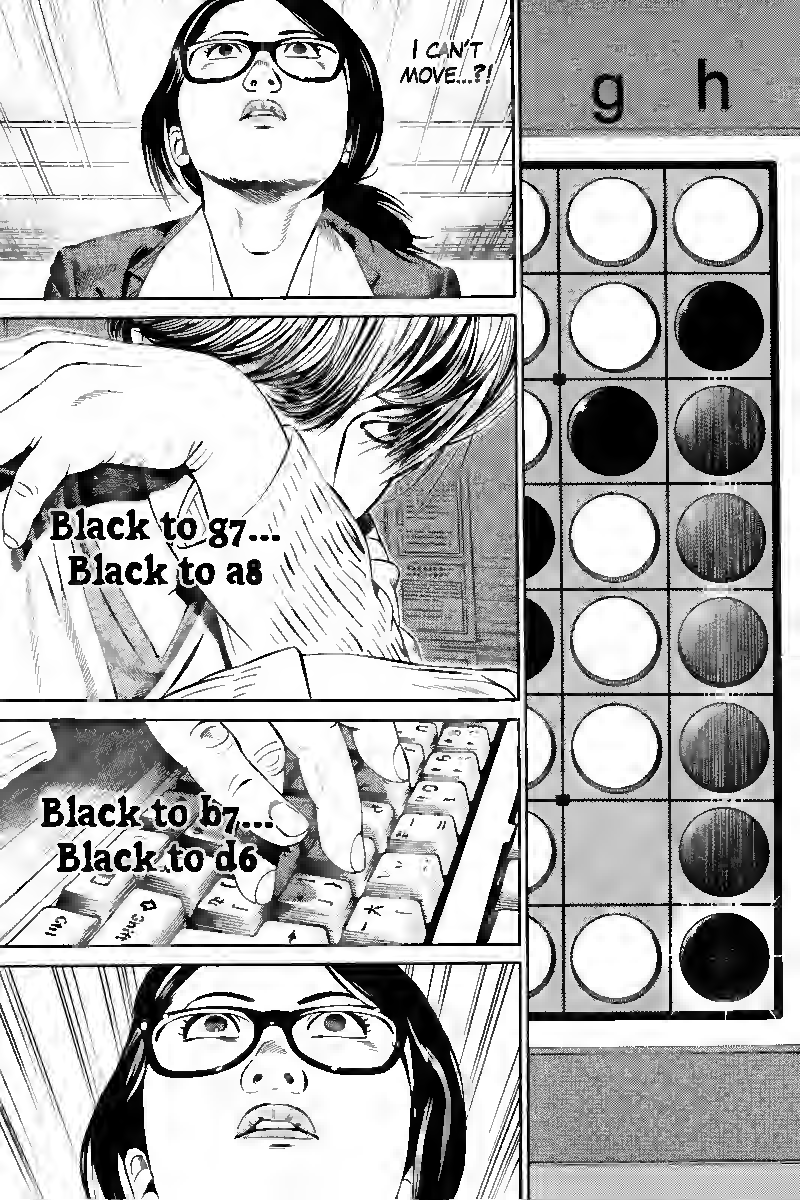
Have you experienced any embarrassing failures recently?

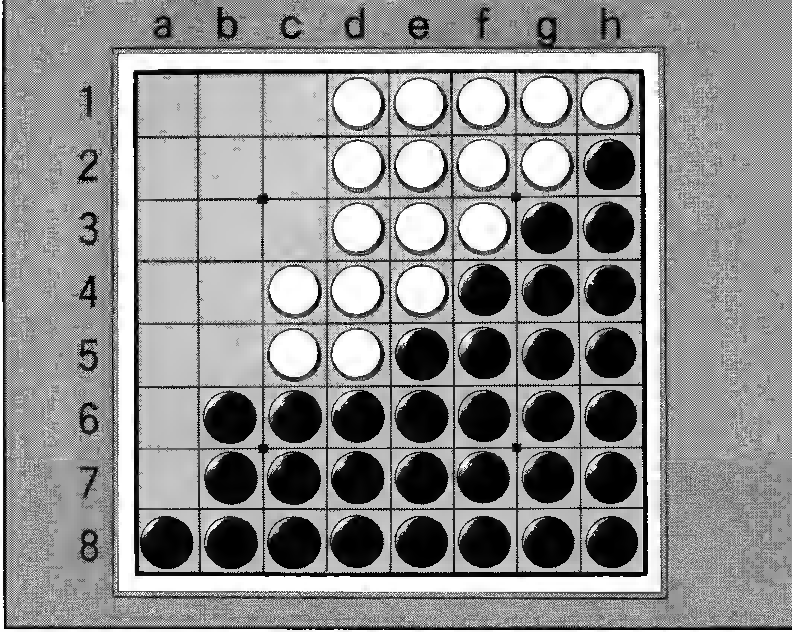
A

Embarrassing failures? I can't really think of anything. Maybe it's just that I didn't notice.

(Noujou Junichi)


g h
Click
TAKE THE CORNER! MOVE WHITE TO H1!
black h8


I CAN'T MOVE...?!
g h
Black to g7...
Black to a8
Black to b7...
Black to d6


a b c d e f g h
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SEEMS LIKE YOUR BUSINESS IS GOING WELL, TODAY.
WELL, YOU'RE CONTRIBUTING, AS WELL MAY I ASK WHAT A POLICE OFFICER MIGHT WANT FROM US?
CLOUD... DO YOU REMEMBER HIM? FROM THE FOSTER CARE FACILITY.

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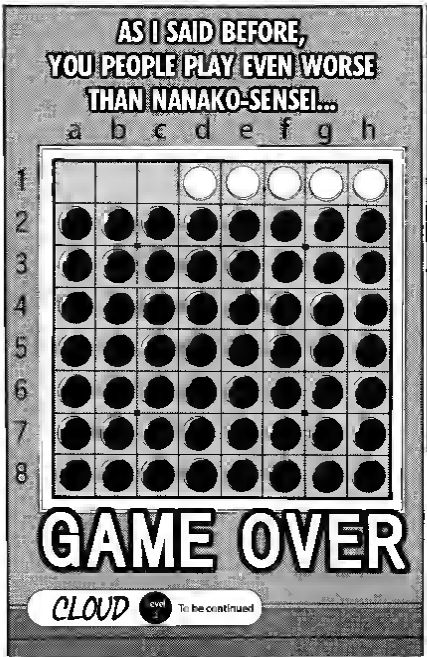
AS I SAID BEFORE,
YOU PEOPLE PLAY EVEN WORSE
THAN NANAKO-SENSEI...
a b c d e f g h
1
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7
8
GAME OVER
CLOUD
To be continued

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